

Submission No. 5
Date Received

RECEIVED
15 JUL 2008

BY: ATSLA

hello

I was interested to read of the enquiry into assistance for Indigenous businesses

Having developed my business in 1998 I have never had any assistance in the development of my business since it's inception. I am also unaware of any government support provided to Indigenous people who are running their own businesses. Despite this, my business is very successful, however, there have been many issues which could have easily resulted in the failure of my business over the years which would have been aided significantly by access to some support. This would have mostly been in the form of business development support in the way of grants for research and development, mentoring and access to resources. All of the grants or research and development dollars exclude the private sector which basically means that anytime I do business in Aboriginal communities it has had to be for free - part of my business philosophy has been to address the disadvantage in Aboriginal communities and there is no mechanism that I can identify that allows the private sector to do this. My business is the only one of its kind in Australia, focusing on Indigenous mental health. Most of our work into community is done on a pro bono basis due to the crises that community are in, the fact that they know of our work and desperately need assistance, and the lack of government support for this. If there is anything in the future that could assist the growth and development of my business I would be extremely interested in this and also what mechanisms may exist that I do not know of

I would also love to employ Indigenous people to learn the operations of my company and so expertise can be developed in more Indigenous people who can then go into their communities and assist those in mental health crisis. Unfortunately, again, unless people are able to generate an income, I cannot employ them. It is impossible to train someone and also expect them to have sufficient expertise to generate money as a fee for service scenario.

Anyway, would appreciate your thoughts!

*Dr Tracy Westerman PGDipPsych,MPsych,PhD
Manaiaq Director, Indigenous Psychological Services*

www.indigenouspsychservices.com.au